WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An equipment management system comprising a user terminal owned by a user and a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment for the user, said user terminal and said server being connected to each other through a network,

said user terminal including

first transmission means for transmitting failure information about equipment connected to said user terminal to said server, and

said server including

calculation means for calculating repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis the failure information transmitted from said transmission means; and

second transmission means for transmitting estimate information including the repair fee estimate calculated by said calculation means to said user terminal.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said calculation means calculates a repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis of a warranty period of the equipment.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the estimate information further includes one or both of a delivery date of a repaired article and a URL for a procedure for making a request to repair the equipment.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein said calculation means comprises determination means for determining whether the repair fee estimate is not more than a predetermined value, and

said second transmission means further transmits the estimate information including information about a new product to said user terminal on the basis of the determination result obtained by said determination means.

5. The system according to claim 3, wherein the estimate information further includes a URL for a procedure for making a request to purchase the new product.

6. An equipment management system comprising a user terminal owned by a user and a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment for the user, said user terminal and said server being connected to each other through a network,

said user terminal including

determination means for determining, on the basis of the remaining quantity of expendable of equipment connected to said user terminal, whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the expendable with the maker, and

notification means for notifying said server of a request to supply the expendable on the basis of the determination result obtained by said determination

means.

7. The system according to claim 6, wherein if said determination means determines that the user has made no maintenance contract of the expendable with the maker, said notification means displays, on a display unit of said user terminal, a window for making a request to purchase the expendable.

8. The system according to claim 6, wherein said server comprises execution means for making an arrangement for supply of the expendable on the basis of the notification of the request to supply the expendable from said notification means.

9. A control method for an equipment management system in which a user terminal owned by a user and a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment for the user are connected to each other through a network, comprising:

the first transmission step of transmitting failure information about equipment connected to the user terminal to the server;

the calculation step of calculating repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis the failure information transmitted in the transmission step; and

the second transmission step of transmitting estimate information including the repair fee estimate calculated in the calculation step to the user terminal.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein in the

calculation step, a repair fee estimate of the equipment is calculated on the basis of a warranty period of the equipment.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein the estimate information further includes one or both of a delivery date of a repaired article and a URL for a procedure for making a request to repair the equipment.

12. The method according to claim 9, wherein the calculation step comprises the determination step of determining whether the repair fee estimate is not more than a predetermined value, and

in the second transmission step, the estimate information including information about a new product is further transmitted to the user terminal on the basis of the determination result obtained in the determination step.

13. The method according to claim 11, wherein the estimate information further includes a URL for a procedure for making a request to purchase the new product.

14. A control method of an equipment management system in which a user terminal owned by a user and a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment for the user are connected to each other through a network, comprising:

the determination step of determining, on the basis of the remaining quantity of expendable of

equipment connected to the user terminal, whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the expendable with the maker; and

the notification step of notifying the server of a request to supply the expendable on the basis of the determination result obtained in the determination step.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein if it is determined in the determination step that the user has made no maintenance contract of the expendable with the maker, a window for making a request to purchase the expendable is displayed on a display unit of the user terminal in the notification step.

16. The method according to claim 14, further comprising the execution step of making an arrangement for supply of the expendable on the basis of the notification of the request to supply the expendable in the notification step.

17. A computer-readable memory storing a program code for control on an equipment management system in which a user terminal owned by a user and a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment for the user are connected to each other through a network, comprising:

a program code for the first transmission step of transmitting failure information about equipment connected to the user terminal to the server;

a program code for the calculation step of

calculating repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis the failure information transmitted in the transmission step; and

a program code for the second transmission step of transmitting estimate information including the repair fee estimate calculated in the calculation step to the user terminal.

18. A computer-readable memory storing a program code for a control on an equipment management system in which a user terminal owned by a user and a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment for the user are connected to each other through a network, comprising:

a program code for the determination step of determining, on the basis of the remaining quantity of expendable of equipment connected to the user terminal, whether the user has made a maintenance contract for the expendable with the maker; and

a program code for the notification step of notifying the server of a request to supply the expendable on the basis of the determination result obtained in the determination step.

19. An equipment management apparatus which is connected to a user terminal owned by a user through a network and managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment to the user, comprising:

calculation means for calculating a repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis of failure information of the equipment connected to the user terminal which is transmitted from the user terminal; and

transmission means for transmitting estimate information including the repair fee estimate calculated by said calculation means to the user terminal.

20. The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said calculation means calculates a repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis of a warranty period of the equipment.

21. The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the estimate information further includes one or both of a delivery date of a repaired article and a URL for a procedure for making a request to repair the equipment.

22. The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein

said calculation means comprises determination means for determining whether the repair fee estimate is not more than a predetermined value, and

said transmission means further transmits the estimate information including information about a new product to said user terminal on the basis of the determination result obtained by said determination means.

23. The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the

estimate information further includes a URL for a procedure for making a request to purchase the new product.

24. An equipment management apparatus to which a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment to the user is connected, comprising:

determination means for determining, on the basis of the remaining quantity of expendable of equipment connected to the equipment management apparatus, whether a maintenance contract for the expendable is made with the maker; and

notification means for notifying said server of a request to supply the expendable on the basis of the determination result obtained by said determination means.

25. The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein if said determination means determines that no maintenance contract of the expendable is made with the maker, said notification means displays, on a display unit of said user terminal, a window for making a request to purchase the expendable.

26. The apparatus according to claim 24, wherein said server comprises execution means for making an arrangement for supply of the expendable on the basis of the notification of the request to supply the expendable from said notification means.

27. A control method for an equipment management apparatus which is connected to a user terminal owned by a user through a network and managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment to the user, comprising:

the calculation step of calculating a repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis of failure information of the equipment connected to the user terminal which is transmitted from the user terminal; and

the transmission step of transmitting estimate information including the repair fee estimate calculated in the calculation step to the user terminal.

28. The method according to claim 27, wherein in the calculation step, a repair fee estimate of the equipment is calculated on the basis of a warranty period of the equipment.

29. The method according to claim 27, wherein the estimate information further includes one or both of a delivery date of a repaired article and a URL for a procedure for making a request to repair the equipment.

30. The method according to claim 27, wherein the calculation step comprises the determination step of determining whether the repair fee estimate is not more than a predetermined value, and

in the transmission step, the estimate information including information about a new product

is further transmitted to the user terminal on the basis of the determination result obtained in the determination step.

31. The method according to claim 30, wherein the estimate information further includes a URL for a procedure for making a request to purchase the new product.

32. A control method for an equipment management apparatus to which a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment to the user is connected, comprising:

the determination step of determining, on the basis of the remaining quantity of expendable of equipment connected to the equipment management method, whether a maintenance contract for the expendable is made with the maker; and

the notification step of notifying the server of a request to supply the expendable on the basis of the determination result obtained in the determination step.

33. The method according to claim 32, wherein in the notification step, if it is determined in the determination step that no maintenance contract of the expendable is made with the maker, a window for making a request to purchase the expendable is displayed on a display unit of the equipment management apparatus.

34. The method according to claim 32, further comprising the execution step of making an arrangement

for supply of the expendable on the basis of the notification of the request to supply the expendable in the notification step.

35. A computer-readable memory storing a program code for a control on an equipment management apparatus which is connected to a user terminal owned by a user through a network and managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment to the user, comprising:

a program code for the calculation step of calculating a repair fee estimate of the equipment on the basis of failure information of the equipment connected to the user terminal which is transmitted from the user terminal; and

a program code for the transmission step of transmitting estimate information including the repair fee estimate calculated in the calculation step to the user terminal.

36. A computer-readable memory storing a program code for control on an equipment management apparatus to which a server managed by a maker that provides equipment and an expendable of the equipment to the user is connected, comprising:

a program code for the determination step of determining, on the basis of the remaining quantity of expendable of equipment connected to the equipment management method, whether a maintenance contract for

the expendable is made with the maker; and

a program code for the notification step of notifying the server of a request to supply the expendable on the basis of the determination result obtained in the determination step.

37. An equipment management apparatus, comprising:

calculation means for calculating an estimate on the basis of failure information from the equipment; and

notification means for making a notification of information about a new product, together with the estimate, if the estimate calculated by said calculation means is not less than a predetermined value.

38. An equipment management apparatus, comprising:

means for automatically ordering the expendable if the remaining quantity of expendable becomes not more than a predetermined value and a maintenance contract has been made; and

means for ordering the expendable by making a user choose between ordering the expendable and not ordering the expendable if the remaining quantity becomes not more than the predetermined value and no maintenance contract has been made.

39. A control method for an equipment management apparatus, comprising:

the calculation step of calculating an estimate

on the basis of failure information from the equipment; and

the notification step of making a notification of information about a new product, together with the estimate, if the estimate calculated in the calculation step is not less than a predetermined value.

40. A control method for an equipment management apparatus, comprising:

the step of automatically ordering the expendable if the remaining quantity of expendable becomes not more than a predetermined value and a maintenance contract has been made; and

the step of ordering the expendable by making a user choose between ordering the expendable and not ordering the expendable if the remaining quantity becomes not more than the predetermined value and no maintenance contract has been made.

41. A computer-readable memory storing an equipment management program, comprising:

the calculation step of calculating an estimate on the basis of failure information from the equipment; and

the notification step of making a notification of information about a new product, together with the estimate, if the estimate calculated in the calculation step is not less than a predetermined value.

42. A computer-readable memory storing an equipment

management program, comprising:

the step of automatically ordering the expendable if the remaining quantity of expendable becomes not more than a predetermined value and a maintenance contract has been made; and

the step of ordering the expendable by making a user choose between ordering the expendable and not ordering the expendable if the remaining quantity becomes not more than the predetermined value and no maintenance contract has been made.